



# JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

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As many of the New York critics pointed out, one of the best parts of the recent revival of Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* was a modern Prologue written by William W. Watt of Lafayette College. The *JNL* is very happy to "scoop" all other periodicals and be the first to make it available for a wider audience.

## A New Prologue to SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

(Delivered by Maurice Evans at the City Center, New York, December 1949—January 1950)

Anxiety, in this neurotic age,  
Has cast its somber shadow on the stage,  
And Realism paints the human race  
As dedicated to the commonplace.  
Thespis, who once tore passions into tatters,  
Now mutters moodily of household matters.  
Exit, with grand éclat, the noblest Roman;  
Enter the beaten drummer, Willy Loman!  
The Superman has dwindled to a midget,  
A glum nonentity, a pollster's digit,  
And experts wish him little more than sorrow  
Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.

But this is not the time and place to grouse!  
There's still a Doctor Goldsmith in the house —  
That magic medico whose limpid meter  
Made sweet deserted Auburn even sweeter,  
Whose lovely woman stooped to folly quicker  
Than women should — according to the Vicar,  
Whose comedy has captivated humans  
From old King George's reign to Mr. Truman's.

In those departed, pre-atomic days  
When musicals were not re-tailored plays,

When ears were unattuned to harsher sounds  
 In public theatres than 'gad or 'zounds,  
 When heroines were often merely scenic,  
 Not nymphomaniac or schizophrenic -  
 Gruff Doctor Johnson, bellowing like thunder  
 While trembling Bozzy scurried out from under,  
 Proclaimed it great - and gathered in the pit  
 A rousing claque to guarantee a hit.  
 And breathes there any mental paralytic  
 Who dares deny that Johnson was a critic  
 As wise as those who wait with breath so bated  
 To slay us with an adjective? It's dated!  
 As dated as the gallants whose carouses  
 Make mad hotels of decent peoples' houses,  
 As dated as the rascal who entices  
 A barmaid down the primrose path to vices,  
 As dated as the flirt who lines the trail  
 With snares to trap the unsuspecting male,  
 The doting mother pampering her son,  
 The veteran whose battle's never done -  
 As dated as your coffee - and, 'tis certain,  
 Good to the last drop of the final curtain!  
 The play's the thing; enough of sound and fury.  
 And you, my patient friends, are judge and jury.  
 May all the world from Hackensack to Yonkers  
 Applaud our Kitty as she stoops - and conquers!

### Guggenheim Fellowships

Included in the list of Guggenheim fellowships for next year are the following having to do with our period:

E.N. Hooker and H.T. Swedenberg (U.C.L.A.) — to prepare an edition of the works of John Dryden

G.W. Stone, Jr. (George Wash.) — Dramatic performances in London, 1660-1800

J.H. Wilson (Ohio State) — Acting methods in the Restoration theatre, 1660-1700

G.C. May (Yale) — Historical, sociological, literary and scientific background of Diderot's novel "La Religieuse"

Important also for scholars in our period will be:

William Haller (Columbia) — History of Puritanism



D.P. Harding (Yale) — Study of Milton's "Paradise Lost"  
 Gilbert Highet (Columbia) — Study of Juvenal

## New Light on the Printing of "The Spectator"

Occasionally we like to point out articles which break new ground and are outstanding of their kind. Of this sort is Donald Bond's (Chicago) "The First Printing of *The Spectator*" in *Modern Philology* for Feb. 1950. Here is a special investigation of the relation between an author and his printers that has proven most fruitful. Bond shows conclusively that issues of the original papers were printed by two different printers, working on alternate days. And since Addison and Steele each generally provided copy for his own favorite printer, a new means of attribution of authorship has been discovered.

This article should show other students how much information and how many avenues of investigation can be opened up by the application of similar research. As Jim Osborn observes, "it should be required reading for all graduate students."

## A New Cowper Bibliography

In our last issue we had space only to mention Lodwick Hartley's *William Cowper: a List of Critical and Biographical Studies Published from 1895 to 1949*. This very useful pamphlet, containing 241 items concerned with Cowper (grouped according to topics) is to be heartily welcomed. Published as part of the *North Carolina State College Record* (Vol. 49, No. 6, Feb. 1950), it is unfortunately not for sale; but Hartley writes that he has a limited number of copies which he will gladly send to interested people for the postage involved. If you would like to have one, write direct to Hartley at the N.C. State College, Raleigh, N.C., inclosing necessary postage.

## Augustan Reprint Society — Johnson Issue

As a special bicentennial issue, the Augustan Reprint Society plans to bring out early in May a facsimile of Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes* and two numbers of *The Rambler*. Bertrand Bronson (Calif.) has provided a critical Introduction. In order to make this issue available for classroom use, extra copies are being printed. The price for single numbers will be 60¢; for orders of twenty-five or more, 50¢. Those familiar with Bronson's admirable

critical writing on Johnson will eagerly await this publication as something out-of-the-ordinary.

### The Johnson Society of London

For the record, we think it might be worth while to pass on portions of a letter recently received from A. Lloyd Jones, describing the history and publications of the London Johnson Society. He writes:

"The Society was founded in June 1928. I can't fix a day of the month — there had been one or two previous meetings of a few who were interested in the idea — but the Society was born in June 1928. The first annual dinner was held at the Hotel Cecil on January 21, 1930. G.K. Chesterton was to have presided, but was prevented by bronchial trouble and W.J. Frederick Green presided in his place.

"The first *Dinner Report* printed was that for the third annual dinner in 1932; then, on account of the expense, no reports were printed for the 1933 and 1934 dinners; but those for 1935 to 1939 were printed. The first three or four dinners were in January, then altered to the summer. There has been no dinner since 1939, but there was a lunch at Brown's Hotel in March 1945 — the bombs had not stopped falling but every available seat was taken. *The Times* of January 22, 1930 contained a brief but adequate report of the first annual dinner held the previous day, and provided similar reports until the dinners ceased (temporarily I hope) in 1939.

"Annual reports with the accounts were issued from the start. That for 1949 is being drafted. I don't find that I have a complete set. The early ones were not the full formal kind they have been for many years. The eleventh and twelfth were printed as one, covering Jan. 1, 1940 to Dec. 31, 1941, this because of the war. The members being scattered in war work or in safety districts away from London and the comparatively few remaining being uneasy over the air raids, the meetings were omitted for a time, but from the end of 1941 were resumed regularly.

"Apart from the dinner reports, etc., there were no regular publications until *The New Rambler* was started (July 1941). Some of the addresses at St. Clement Danes Church in December were printed apparently by the Society."

Of these last, your editor has seen those by R.W. Chapman (1926);



S.C. Roberts (1927); Iolo A. Williams (1935); J.J.G. Stockley (1936); Cecil Harmsworth (1937); Clement F. Rogers (1938). If any of our readers have copies of others, please let us know. We are anxious to have a complete list of all these Johnsonian publications.

## Savage and Thales

Bill Wimsatt (Yale) sends in the interesting speculation:

"A reading of the evidence (Boswell's *Life*, i, 125; Smith and McAdam, *Poems of Johnson*, p. 8) can scarcely fail to convince one that the departure of Johnson's friend the dissipated poet Richard Savage from London for Wales in July, 1739, was not the model for the departure of 'injur'd THALES' from London for Wales in Johnson's poem *London*, published in May, 1738. Not only are the dates in the wrong order, but the departure of Thales has ample literary authorization in Johnson's source, the Third Satire of Juvenal, where Umbricius, disgusted with life at Rome, departs for Cumae. Nevertheless, the resemblance between the two incidents, or between Johnson's poem and the life, is certainly striking — in the destination Wales, in the embittered or 'injured' characters of Thales and Savage, and in the warm concern shown by the friend left behind, the narrator in the poem and Johnson in real life. Savage, says Johnson in his *Life of Savage* (1744), 'parted from the author of this narrative with tears in his eyes.' And G.B. Hill has pointed out the parallel between the vision of rural felicity entertained by Savage and that attributed in the poem to Thales. These resemblances actually seem to have given rise to the statement by Johnson's early biographer Hawkins that the biographical incident was the source of the poetic. Although Johnson himself is recorded as having denied that Thales meant 'any particular person,' it is difficult to suppose that, after the event at least, he himself was not impressed by the curious parallel. There is in fact one small piece of evidence that he was. A few years ago in an article on Johnson's self-quotations in the Dictionary — a work scattered with incidental memorials to Johnson's affections and prejudices — I quoted, but without arguing their significance, the following two definitions and self-quotations under the transitive verb *dissipate*.

2. To scatter the attention.

This slavery to his passions produced a life

irregular and dissipated.

*Savage's Life.*

3. To spend a fortune.

The wherry that contains  
Of dissipated wealth the poor remains.

*London.*

"I now suggest that in this collocation of materials we have Johnson's casually erected and semi-private testimony to the fact that, in what was for him a peculiarly poignant instance, life had been the realization of poetic vision. It may have seemed to him almost as if, in the words of Boswell's note, 'the event was... foreseen.'"

### New Publications

The latest critical survey of 18th century literature is John Butt's *The Augustan Age*, part of Hutchinson's University Library series. Not intended as a comprehensive history of English literature of the period, the 152 page book is designed instead to introduce general readers to some of the more important writers and trends of thought of the Augustan Age. There are chapters on Dryden, Addison, Swift, Pope, Thomson, Gray, Johnson, and shorter discussions of the shifting currents of taste of the period. Written by the General Editor of the Twickenham Edition of Pope and Editor of *RES*, it carries the stamp of his wide knowledge of the period, and can obviously be depended upon for factual information and the latest critical point of view. While it may not be important for the scholarly specialist, it should provide us with a very useful volume, by which beginning students may secure an unprejudiced introduction to the classical period in English literature. Judged in the light of what it sets out to do, it is an admirable piece of work.

A very valuable tool for all of us is William Matthews' (U.C.L.A.) *British Diaries: an Annotated Bibliography of British Diaries Written between 1442 and 1942*, just published by the Univ. of California Press. Matthews includes unpublished as well as published diaries; he gives bibliographical details about printed works, the location of unprinted manuscripts, important details about the diaries and the diarists, and sometimes a short critical evaluation. The diaries are arranged chronologically by years according to the first entry. Matthews also includes a special index of diaries which cover over ten years of time; and a complete index to authors.



The importance of this compilation for 18th century scholars may be indicated by the fact that approximately a hundred pages are given over to our period. A copy should certainly be available to every research worker.

Just received from F. Cordasco (Long Island Univ.) is No. 8 of his 18th century bibliographical pamphlets: *The 18th Century Novel: a Handlist of General Histories and Articles of the Last Twenty-five Years with a Notice of Bibliographical Guides*, with an introductory note by J.R. Foster. Included are 110 numbered items.

We are delighted to see copies of the new American edition of Everyman's Library — with a vastly improved format. The William Ellery Leonard translation of Lucretius' *Of the Nature of Things*, one of the first to be issued in this attractive new printing, gives evidence of what we may hope for in the future. Your editor here makes the plea that the publishers will speedily provide new editions of 18th-century classics, particularly the novels of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, etc.

### Rasselas

As we suspected, C.R. Tracy's recent article "Democritus Arise!" has stirred up some strong feelings. Nicholas Joost (Loyola, Chicago) has sent on an extended analysis, unfortunately too long to be included here; and Donald Green (Saskatchewan) explodes with the following blast:

The key to Tracy's erroneous interpretation, Green insists, "is discovered in his sentence ' [Rasselas] is, rather, the antithesis of the man of common sense of the eighteenth century, and a stubborn rationalist who makes himself ridiculous by refusing to comply with the *modus vivendi* that has been worked out by the men of good sense of his age.' Tracy has, he continues, "a preconceived idea of what the eighteenth century ought to be, and is distressed, when he actually examines a document of the time, to find that it does not tally with that preconceived idea. There was no more *modus vivendi* in the eighteenth than in any other century. It is not ridiculous, but only too tragically inevitable, that Rasselas, preyed upon by 'the hunger of imagination' cannot live a life of 'common sense,' and no one knew it better than Johnson. It is the same human dilemma insisted upon by Schopenhauer; to miss the Schopenhauer in Johnson is to miss Johnson completely. Tracy would do well to look again at the 'Prayers and Meditations,' which form the best commentary on *Rasselas*."

"Similarly with the literary criticism in *Rasselas*: Tracy has heard that Johnson was a 'classical' critic; and when he finds that he is not, he resolves his bafflement by saying that Johnson could not have meant what he said. If he will read the 'Preface to Shakespeare,' he will find that Johnson praises Shakespeare for possessing exactly the qualities of the poet desiderated by Imlac. Furthermore, 'nature' in *Rasselas* is not to be equated with 'scenery.'"

### Forthcoming Publications

Announced for publication in May is the first volume of the long-awaited *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, to be issued by the Princeton Univ. Press. A little brochure, just received, explains the editorial procedure to be followed and makes clear how valuable a scholarly work the series will be. Lyman H. Butterfield, a loyal *JNL* subscriber, is one of the general editors.

Maurice Johnson's (Syracuse) critical study of Swift's poetry will be published by the Syracuse Univ. Press next September.

From F. Cordasco comes word of his immediate publishing plans. Of interest to 18th century scholars will be: *A Bibliography of Robert Katt, M.D., Author of the Bibliotheca Britannica. With a Facsimile Edition of His Catalogue for Medical Students. A Contribution to 18th Century Medical History; and Bibliotheca Bibliographica Classica. A Short-title Catalogue of Books about Books Published from 1700-1800.* In collaboration with Burt Franklin he is bringing out *Adam Smith, a Bibliographical Checklist. An International Record of Critical Writings and Scholarship Relating to Smith and Smithian Theory 1876-1950.*

The Grove Press in New York City is bringing out a new inexpensive edition of *The Selected Writings of the Ingenious Mrs. Aphra Behn.*

No. 23 of the Augustan Reprint Society pamphlets, Dryden's *His Majesties Declaration Defended* (1681), with an Introduction by Godfrey Davies, should be out this month. Extra copies may be secured for 60¢ (50¢ in quantities over 25).

### Some Recent Articles

It is not our intention in the *JNL* to list every article concerned with the 18th century, since we do not wish to usurp the function of the annual bibliographers. But we do mention those we have



chanced to see, or those which have been called to our attention. If we miss important items, do please drop us a card with the pertinent details.

Nicholas Joost has two articles connected with Ambrose Philips' *Free-Thinker*: "The Fables of Fenelon and Philips' *Free-Thinker* in *SP* for January; and "Gulliver and the *Free-Thinker*" in *MLN* for March. Other articles concerned with the earlier period are: A.C. Keller, "Ancients and Moderns in the Early Seventeenth Century" in *MLQ* for March; Oscar Sherwin, "Thomas Firmin: Puritan Precursor of WPA" in *Journal of Modern History* for March; W. Marston Acres, "The South Sea Company" in *N & Q* for April 1; Irvin Ehrenpreis, "Swift's Voyages" in *MLN* for April.

Having to do with the later period are: L.M. Price, "George Barnwell Abroad," *Comparative Literature* for Spring 1950; Sir Charles Petrie, "Dr. Johnson and the Forty-five" in *English Review Mag.* for Feb.; W.C. Smith, "Handeliana," *Music and Letters* for April; F. Cordaso, "Laughlin Maclean (1721-1777): Further Information on the Junius Mystery" in *N & Q* for April 1; J. Russell-Wood, "A Biographical Note on William Brownrigg, M.D., F.R.S. (1711-1800)" in *Annals of Science* for July 27, 1949.

### Johnson and Scenery

We had intended earlier to remark on Carlos Baker's (Princeton) excellent article "The Cham on Horseback" which appeared in the Winter number of the *Virginia Quarterly Review*. While Johnsonian specialists have long been aware that Johnson was not unaffected by external nature, it is a welcome sign to have a scholar who has written on Shelley and the Romantics comment: "the legend of Johnson's insensitivity to natural scenery is old, but its age has not made it respectable." Baker examines carefully Johnson's travels to Scotland, Wales, and France — his various remarks on scenery, and his love of the English countryside — and concludes by quoting Boswell's remark made about another matter: "How different does the story appear, when accompanied with all those circumstances which really belong to it."

### A Request

Lillian de la Torre (Mrs. George McCue, 1134 E. High St., Colorado Springs, Colo.) has been at work for some time on a book to be called *The Heir of Douglas*, in which she will do for the celebrated

Douglass case what she did for the Elizabeth Canning affair. She writes that she is afraid the research will turn into a life work. "The literary and social side-lights are endless — on Hume, on Adam Smith, on Boswell, on David Mallet; on all the legal lights of the period; on the state of the exiled Jacobites; on life in London and Paris; on the state of midwifery; and so on and so on and so on." There has been so much written about the case that merely collecting the evidence is a huge job. Almost every letter writer and diarist has something to say about it.

She further writes: "I have been meaning to ask whether you could put an appeal in the *JNL*. I have cast a wide net in diaries, memoirs and letters of the time (1762-69), but I am sure there are many published, and more unpublished, that have escaped me. I would be very grateful if your 18th century readers would send me any reference they happen to run across. Of course I have, to name a few off-hand, Boswell, Walpole, Lady Louisa Stuart, Lord Shelburne, Jupiter Carlyle, Kay's Portraits, Lady Mary Coke, etc. I would be most grateful for other references."

### Miscellaneous News Items

William Woods (Little Woolgarstone Cottage, Corfu Castle, Dorset) sends word that the New York Public Library has just acquired 38 manuscript letters of the elder Charles Burney — 18 to Mrs. Crewe, others to Fulke Greville, Bewley, Diderot, Crisp, etc. The 42nd St. library is thus steadily increasing its superb collection of Burneyana.

A Lloyd Jones of the Johnson Society of London writes that R.W. Chapman recently spoke to the society on "Boswell's Archives." It is good news that Chapman plans to visit this country next fall. We hope to give more details of his trip in the next issue.

James Sutherland, who is to spend next year as Visiting Professor at Indiana University, is considering renting his attractive house about 7 miles from Oxford for the time he will be in this country. Any visiting American scholar who is interested should get in touch with Sutherland at Courtenay Lodge, Sutton Courtenay, Berks.

John Harold Hutchins (C.C.N.Y.) adds the following to our list of English research workers available for special investigations: Miss Lucy Drucker, 118 A Alexandra Rd., London N.W. 8.

Rudolf Kirk sends in evidence that the New Jersey Bell Telephone



Co. now "flings its cap for polish and for Pope." Prominently displayed on a recent little folder are Pope's lines beginning "In that soft season when descending showers."

There is much about recent 18th century scholarship in Robert Halsband's (Hunter) article on University Press publications in the current *Saturday Review of Literature*.

### Research in Progress

In our last issue we described W.H. Bond's interesting article about Christopher Smart's "Jubilate Agno." He now writes from the Harvard Library: "I have been preparing a text from a fresh reading of the MS., which will remove several important misreadings by Stead (and I hope introduce no new misreadings of my own!) ... I hope before too long to have it in type according to the scheme outlined in my article. I shall then feel that I have done my duty by a work which has afforded me a great deal of enjoyment. I should think that eventually the psychologists might have a field day with the poem, regarded simply as an exercise in free association."

Donald Cornu (Univ. of Wash.), whose article "Dr. Johnson at Fort Augustus: Captain Lewis Ourry" appeared in the March *MLQ*, writes that he hopes to bring out some day an edition of Ourry's letters from the originals in the British Museum. Included are some 300 fairly long letters.

### Swift's Poems about Women

Clarence L. Kulisheck (Baker Univ.) comments on the remarks in our last issue concerning Swift's scatological poems about women.

"A curiously interesting but almost never mentioned development of the idea that Swift was 'exorcising some devil' is found in volume III of Thomas Beddoes' *Hygeia: or Essays Moral and Medical* (1803). The essay is an amusing anticipation of the psycho-pathological interpretations of the present century.

There is good supporting evidence in Book IV of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* for the view that Swift was merely following a recognizable literary convention in these poems. Swift knew the work well, and many of his lines sound very much like echoes of Lucretian passages. The affinity is especially apparent in that section of *De Rerum Natura* which deals with the passion of love (ll. 1050-1279). Compare, for instance, the

conclusion of *The Lady's Dressing Room* (ll. 119-144) with the following passage from Lucretius:

and there he'd damn himself  
 For his fatuity, observing how  
 He had assigned to that same lady more—  
 Than it is proper to concede to mortals.  
 And these our Venuses are 'ware of this.  
 Wherefore the more are they at pains to hide  
 All those behind-the-scenes of life from those  
 Whom they desire to keep in bonds of love—  
 In vain, since ne'ertheless thou canst by thought  
 Drag all the matter forth into the light  
 And well search out the cause of all these smiles;  
 And if of graceful mind she be and kind,  
 Do thou, in thy turn, overlook the same,  
 And thus allow for poor mortality.

[W. E. Leonard's translation]

Likewise the famous (or infamous?) line on Celia's unromantic necessities that Swift thought highly enough of to use both in *The Lady's Dressing Room* and *Cassinus and Peter* sounds very much like a somewhat heightened rendition of Lucretius':

nempe eadem facit, et scimus facere, omnia turpi.

(*De Rerum Natura*, Book IV, 1174)

### Did Gainsborough Paint Chatterton?

In answer to our query in the April issue, H.R. Archer (Clark Library, Los Angeles) writes: "The Atwater Kent painting is owned by a local firm of booksellers: Bennett & Marshall, who bought the painting at the auction. They are featuring it in the sales catalogue which is to be issued soon.... the painting is priced at \$3,750. Some think it authentic; others say no." Can any of our readers provide further evidence bearing on the authenticity of this painting? Any details concerning possible connections of Gainsborough and Chatterton, or opportunities for any relationship, would be of value. (The address of Bennett & Marshall, the present owners, is 612 Sixth St., Los Angeles, Calif.).